The Sun.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1880.

The regular circulation of THE SUN *for the week ending Dec. 18, 1880, was:*

Sunday	117,946	Weekly	82,820
Monday	108,550	Thursday	108,749
Tuesday	108,619	Friday	107,954
Wednesday	108,396	Saturday	109,474
Total for the week			852,108

No Perpetuity of Power.

We believe that the perpetuity or prolongation of executive power provided for in Senator PENDLETON's Civil Service bill is at variance with the genius of our free institutions, and that the same objections hold good against it which lie against enlarging the term of the President, or electing a President to a third term.

The frequent return of power to the hands of the people, its original source, and whence alone it emanates, is essential to the preservation of those doctrines of equality which lie at the foundation of our Government.

Once let a set even of minor clerks get firmly established in office, with a guarantee of permanency—a legal protection against removal save by the action of a many-headed commission—and the aristocracy of office and the insolence of every petty official would begin to appear.

This would be intolerable. It affords in itself a conclusive reason why no such system will be endured in the United States.

The Last Sunday Before Christmas.

To-day is the last Sunday before Christmas, and probably the preachers will all refer to the great anniversary with which the week will close.

Of all the events and occurrences of the past commemorated by the world—the victories in war, the treaties of peace, the emancipation of peoples, and the political triumphs of our own and other races—the birth of CHRIST is by far the most momentous, and the most widely celebrated.

It occurred at a time when the Western world was especially prepared for the reception of new religious ideas. The vitality had gone out of Greek and Roman paganism; and throughout the Roman empire, which had become of almost universal scope, the various national religions were losing their hold on the different peoples. As to Rome itself, its policy tolerated all religions, for it was indifferent to all, and the indifference was that of a philosophical skepticism. It was ready to put up on the Pantheon the gods of the nations it conquered, and worshippers could make their selection for themselves.

Of course by so doing Rome satirized all existing religions. One religion was about as good as another in the view of its statesmen; and it made no difference which you took so long as you pleased your fancy. Their contemptuous treatment of traditional religions, for that is about what it amounted to, typified or induced a prevailing disregard for the old pagan systems throughout the civilized world. The more intelligent of the people believed in nothing except an incomprehensible and inexorable Fate in the world above, and material power in the world beneath. There were for them no gods and goddesses of love and hate, but a reign of law beyond the power of man to understand and to influence. Instead of looking to religion for comfort, therefore, serious and enlightened men courted a philosophy to which we even now turn with admiration, even if it is unable to give us satisfactory consolation.

The intelligent world had got beyond regarding the deities and divinities to which they were accustomed as anything more than the embodiment of men's conceptions of the attributes of the incomprehensible ruling power above. They looked upon them as the creations of the childhood of the race, the products of its poetry. How best to use life was the great theme of their own philosophy.

Christianity, therefore, came upon the Western world at a time when the old religions had fallen into decay, and when reflecting men were prepared by philosophy to accept the abstract ideas of GOD and of duty it inculcated. It also presented a practical scheme of life; and there was consolation, refreshment, and fascination in its beautiful theory of the brotherhood of man and of equality before GOD.

It had in it the germs of a universal religion which should replace the universal indifference or skepticism regarding the existing national or race religions. And that was something for which men were hankering. They were not thus indifferent and skeptical because they were without interest in religion, but because in the prevailing religious discussions paganism had failed to approve itself to their reason and their consciences. They were rather unusually interested in religion, but they had lost all faith in the conventional religion they possessed. Read the Discourses of EPICTETUS, who lived in the time of CHRIST, and whose teachings were held in high honor both in his own and in the next succeeding generation, and you will find how enlightened was the treatment of the problems of life, and how sublime philosophy had become.

The pure morality taught by Christianity and practically exemplified in the lives of its followers was perhaps the most potent influence it first possessed. Society had become so corrupted during the decadence of paganism that it was forced to resort for salvation to the salt of Christian ethics. And when Christianity was adopted by CONSTANTINE he used the machinery and the ideas of the Christian spiritual commonwealth to consolidate and strengthen his unwieldy empire. It became the State Church, and with the help of the State it advanced with marvellous rapidity over the civilized world, ripe for the reception of a universal religion.

These facts regarding the early history of Christianity are worth the most serious thought of the preachers; for even if we do not find in the present state of public thought touching religion an exact parallel to that which we have described as distinguishing the civilized world at the period of CHRIST's birth, we do see in it features which bear a suggestive likeness to the indifference and skepticism of decaying paganism.

What is agnosticism, now progressing with so rapid strides, both here and in Europe, but the rejection of all existing religion? What is it but an effort to substitute philosophy, and a philosophy akin to that of the period of which we have spoken, for the complex theology which has been spun out of the simple Christian moral and religious teachings?

Christianity got its first impulse from its pure morality, as exemplified in the lives of the early Christians, from their common zeal in its behalf, and from their practical efforts to realize on earth the kingdom of heaven which its Founder labored to establish. Its reviving impulse must come from the same source.

Parnell's Scheme Tested by Experiment.

Ever since the project of transforming the Irish tenant into an owner of the land he tills was mooted, the opponents of the measure have averred it would not work. They have pointed out that the experiment had already been made on a small scale in Ireland, where, they allege, the practical outcome has been far from satisfactory. These assertions, incessantly repeated by the London press, have prompted a careful inquiry into the operation of the BRIGHT clauses in the Land act, and of similar provisions in the law disposing of the property of the disestablished Anglican Church. The results of a thorough study of these recent precedents for the scheme urged by Mr. PARNELL are printed in the last number of the *Fortnightly Review.*

The current notion on this subject is that those Irish farmers who availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the legislation above mentioned to purchase their holdings, are no better off to-day than their neighbors who are still tenants. Now, if this were true, it would not be by any means conclusive, in view of the few years which have elapsed since the change, of the high valuation at which it is admitted the land was sold, and of the heavy burdens which the present purchaser assumed. He had to procure from one-fourth to one-third of the purchase money in cash, to defray the cost of the conveyancing, and to pay the Government every year—in the form of interest, or installments on the amount left on mortgage—a considerable sum.

When we bear in mind, too, that the brief period which has intervened since the quondam tenant felt the spur of ownership has been one of unusual disappointment and hardship in respect of crops, we could hardly expect to see any very marked improvement in his situation. Such an expectation would be no more reasonable than that entertained in Russia with regard to the enfranchised serfs at the epoch of emancipation. For a good many years after the communes of Muscovy were enabled, mainly through Government advances, to buy the land they occupied, the accommodation of things to new conditions was attended by a great deal of friction. Thereupon the croakers, who had eyes only for the difficulties and shortcomings of detail, were ready enough to call the plan of replacing serfdom by a system of peasant proprietorship a sentimental blunder. As time has gone on, however, and the sum due the Government has been very much reduced, the progress of the Russian peasantry in material well being and in all the qualities which make a man and a citizen is unmistakable. No one now would venture to assert that the Russian *moujik* does not get more wealth out of the soil and more happiness out of life than he did under the old system, no matter with how much liberality his master and landlord might have treated him. If the Irish peasants in like manner had tried for a quarter of a century the experiment of ownership, it would be fair to pass judgment on the workings of the system. As a matter of fact, a few have tried it from five to eight years. It follows that the data collected in the *Fortnightly* would have proved little or nothing had their tenor been unfavorable. The fact, however, that a decided change for the better can already be observed in the condition of those tenants who have come to own their farms, notwithstanding the adverse circumstances above enumerated, seems to prove a good deal.

It appears that the whole number of peasant proprietors created by the Church and Land acts is between 6,000 and 7,000. A few of these bought their farms outright, but the vast majority took advantage of the provision by which in one case three-fourths, and in the other case two-thirds, of the purchase money was allowed to remain on mortgage. Now, it is significant that the Church Commissioners have not had to foreclose any of their mortgages for non-payment of interest or installments. By the end of 1879 the arrears due from peasant owners amounted to only ten per cent. on the whole annual sum receivable. This is the more noteworthy, because, while landlords generally have found it almost impossible to collect their full rents, the new peasant owners have had to furnish the full amount of their installments, the commissioners not being empowered to give them relief. This punctuality of payment seems to attest an exercise of industry and thrift for which the Irish agriculturist very seldom attains credit. We must bear in mind that when the purchaser, instead of paying interest, preferred to liquidate the sum mortgaged by installments, these usually exceeded the old rents. Neither must we overlook the circumstances under which the part of the purchase money required to be paid down was raised. This was done in many cases by a sale of the tenant's farm stock; in others by borrowing from neighbors, solicitors, and money lenders at rates of interest varying from four to twenty per cent. The new owners had to pay, moreover, the cost of their deeds and mortgages, which amounted in some instances to thirty per cent. on the purchase money. In one case a blacksmith, who had bought for $40 the site of his cabin and forge, had to pay $62.50 for the conveyance of the plot. Of course the application of a system of cheap and quick transfer, like the method of registration and insurance of titles practised in Australia, is an essential part of Mr. PARNELL's project for the creation of a peasant proprietary.

It is really remarkable how far the new peasant owner, with all these burdens on his shoulders, has gone in the way of restocking his farm, of improving the fixtures, of reclaiming waste land, and meeting his obligations. Mr. MURROUGH O'BRIEN, the result of whose inquiries is published in the *Fortnightly*, was especially struck by the amount of land reclaimed and the attention paid to dwellings and outbuildings on the purchased holdings. In one instance the sale of an estate to twenty-one occupiers included a barren, mountainous tract of 200 acres, held in common by the purchasers. Within two years this ground, which had always been deemed worthless, was subdivided, fenced, and converted into arable soil. Another case illustrates still more strikingly the effect of ownership; this was a farm of 69 acres, much of it marshy ground, no attempt to reclaim which had been made by tenants. Within five years after its purchase all but five acres of this wet land had been trenched and brought under cultivation. On a farm of 45 acres, visited by Mr. O'BRIEN, the homestead had been very much enlarged and improved by the tenant since he became the owner; a plantation of larch trees had been added to the standing timber, a new cow house and stable had been finished at a cost of $500, and the old stable had been turned into a barn and a threshing machine put up in it. The land, too, was enhanced in value by subsoiling and removal of stones, hundreds of loads of which had been piled up near the house. This man's neighbors, who had also bought their farms, were improving them in the same manner. One of them remarked that if the Church act had not been passed his rent would have been doubled on account of what he had done. Another said: "The Government have twice the security for their money left on mortgage that they had when I bought."

There have been, no doubt, many cases of sales by the original purchasers on account of pecuniary embarrassment. How much the land had profited by their exertions during the period of proprietorship is shown by the increased prices which have been generally obtained. Among the examples cited by Mr. O'BRIEN is a farm bought in 1874 for $2,190, this sum being twenty-seven and a half times the rent, whereas the average selling value of the land throughout Ireland in that year was less than twenty-one times the rent. The owner went on improving, but got into difficulties, and on the farm being sold in 1879, it brought $5,000. In another instance five and a half acres, sold in 1873 for $335 (twenty-two and one-third times the rent, or more than the average price that year), were resold five years later for $900. Seven acres adjoining these, bought in 1873 for $570, were subsequently purchased for $2,500. The striking profits on resale were no doubt partly due to the growing attractiveness of small fee simple lots, as well as to the improvements made; but they do not prove that the original prices obtained by the Church Commissioners were low. These were, as a matter of fact, rather above the market rates.

The facts collected in the *Fortnightly* tend to refute the objection that an extension of the BRIGHT scheme to the proportions advocated by Mr. PARNELL would be attended with financial loss; that the present owners would be unable to repay the purchase money advanced, and would ultimately throw their lands back on the Government. It must be owned that the experiments made under the Church and Land acts point to a different conclusion. They indicate that the Irish tenant deserves, at all events, as fair a chance, and would be at least as likely to profit by it, as the Russian serf.

The Site for the World's Fair.

The hotel keepers and others who are in alarm because of the selection of the Inwood site for the World's Fair will probably be consoled when they hear that it is by no means settled that the exhibition will be put there. It is doubtful even whether the fair can be held in 1883, as was proposed; and whether it will be held there then or at any subsequent time, is still more doubtful.

The Commissioners named in the act of incorporation for the United States International Commission met in this city last summer and appointed an executive committee, who were charged with the performance of two things especially. The first was the raising of one million dollars for the undertaking before the first of next January, as required in the act, and the other was the recommendation of a site for the fair.

How far they have succeeded in the first purpose we do not know definitely; but the money must be obtained, or the time allowed by the act will have to be extended by Congress. As to a site, they are understood to have reached a decision; though they will not report it until the next meeting—in January, probably—of the Commission as a whole. Their action, however, is not final, for they have only advisory power, and the question of the adoption of their report will come up at that meeting.

It is very doubtful whether the Inwood site, which they favor, will be the one finally selected. Both outside and inside the Commission the advantages and disadvantages of the place will be discussed, and it may fail to commend itself to the judgment of the community, and consequently to the Commissioners; for they must respect the popular sentiment if they expect to raise all the money they want, and to make the undertaking successful.

The committee therefore acted wisely and fairly in making public their preference as soon as they formed it. It gave a chance for discussion, from which the superior body can derive great assistance in reaching a proper decision.

Unquestionably Inwood offers many attractions for the fair. It is not very far away from the centre of the city. The ground is high, and though the region has suffered from malaria, owing to adjacent swamps and to defective drainage, it is possible for sanitary engineering to overcome those evils. The Philadelphia Exhibition, in 1876, was successful in many ways, and the pride which the Philadelphians took in it while it was going on, and which they hold as a dearly prized and permanent possession, was justified on various accounts. But from a sanitary point of view, the exhibition at Fairmount Park was discreditable to its managers. The sewage from its grounds contaminated the drinking water, it is alleged. At any rate, whatever the cause was, great injury was done the health of many of the visitors. The fair will be long remembered throughout the country because of that circumstance alone.

The sanitary question is, therefore, the most important one the Commission will have to deal with; and there is no reason, in the present state of sanitary engineering, why it should not be settled in a way to obviate all danger to health from the surroundings of the fair. Is Inwood the best site obtainable in that respect? There are strong arguments used on both sides of the question, and the Commission will hear them when the report of its committee is presented for adoption.

Another great question is that of accessibility, both for the landing of goods and the transportation of visitors. Is Inwood the best attainable site in that respect? The real estate combination concerned about getting the fair there—for, of course, landed speculation lies behind the urging of all the proposed sites—contends that Inwood meets the requirements admirably. But not only the hotel keepers, who think Inwood is too far off, but other people also, doubt whether that can be proved. The situation of the fair there might, and of course would, favor the VANDERBILT interest; but whether the public would be best accommodated is the chief matter for the Commission to consider.

There are other sites, particularly that at Port Morris, for which strong arguments will be used; and they may carry the day against the rival real estate and the railway interests which are leagued in support of Inwood. The question of site is, therefore, by no means determined.

The improvements which the fair will necessitate on any site are so great and costly, and they will be of so vast permanent value that the owners of the land either at Inwood or at Port Morris can well afford to give the Commission its use for nothing, and to subscribe liberally for the fair besides. They will make money out of it anyway; but the question of the health and convenience of the public is the first one, and the complete success of the undertaking will depend on its wise decision by the Commission.

There is still so much to do in the way of preliminary work that it looks as if the date of the fair would have to be put off until 1885; and that is soon enough for it.

Atheism in Colleges.

President JOHN BASCOM of the Wisconsin University contributes an article on this subject to the last *North American Review.* The fashionable word for unbelief at the present day is agnosticism, which means "an assertion of inability to reach ultimate truths." But what can agnosticism issue in but atheism, asks President BASCOM. He therefore entitles his paper "Atheism in Colleges."

We cannot deny that Mr. BASCOM is justified in so doing. Agnosticism does indeed abandon the GOD of theology. It is unable to say whether there is a personal GOD or not, or a future life of man or not. Each of these questions it gives up as beyond the ability of man to answer. Of course a Christian theologian may therefore call agnostics atheists without laying himself open to a charge of unfairness.

President BASCOM does not believe that unbelief is yet so widespread and so fundamental in its grounds here as it is in England. "Skepticism," he acknowledges, "is passing over England as a tidal wave of great breadth and force:" but in the United States, religious conservatism still stands as a barrier against its progress. It is manifest, however, that he foresees that the wave is coming with such force and volume that it may prove a deluge.

Here, too, he is undoubtedly justified by the facts. So far as the churches here are concerned, they have up to this time been pretty successful in smothering skeptical cries. The professional timidity of the clergy, especially marked in this country, where a clergyman's livelihood is commonly furnished only by volunteer contributions, is a great restraint. Clerical doubters prudently keep their doubts to themselves. And as to the laity, of the older generation especially, the majority of them are too much concerned about material affairs to have much time to spend in religious or philosophical speculation. If they have formed the habit of going to church, they are likely to keep it up; and, as a rule, they have no very active interest in abstract or philosophical questions of any sort.

The young men in the colleges, however, and the young men outside of them who are given to serious reading and to thought, are very apt to be skeptics. They are more influenced by the characteristic tone and temper of the day, which are unquestionably antagonistic to faith. There is also a prevailing distrust of religious methods, and religious dogmas have lost their controlling influence. Even if there is nothing more, indifference to religion will appear. This is evident enough from the great and increasing decline of church attendance in proportion to the population. It is also shown in the almost stationary membership of denominations like the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists in the great centres of intellectual activity.

The wave of unbelief is, therefore, gathering volume and force; and if signs do not fail, before many years it will be sweeping over this country, and the peril which the churches will experience therefrom will be great. President BASCOM recognizes what he calls "the trend of our times, the immense reaction that is on us;" and instead of trying to ward it off after the fashion of recent denominational councils, he would invite the conflict. "We are to defend ourselves in this conflict with unbelief," he says, "by precipitating it rather than by postponing it."

No doubt, this is the wise policy. The lack of courage, the refusal to acknowledge the existence of the emergency in which it now finds itself, the misunderstanding of the positions of its enemy, and the reliance on disused methods and terms of controversy, are all construed as evidences of weakness in the Church; and shall we not say that they are rightly so construed?

But we do not find that President BASCOM offers any valuable suggestions as to the means of combating atheism either in the colleges or outside of them. He would oppose philosophy with philosophy, he says, but he does not show how it is to be done; how he would upset the new and popular psychology which depends on physical experiment, and substitue the old psychology based on the exploration of the consciousness. All he has to recommend is that the colleges shall provide professors "able and active to the pitch of our times in their own departments." But the trouble is that the sort of men he describes are usually in the camp of the enemy. They may try to hide their unbelief, but as defenders of the faith they are worthless. For not only among the students at the colleges, but also among their teachers, agnosticism is prevailing where they are men "active to the pitch of our times, large minded and earnest." We find from experience that while the students look upon the old philosophical lectures as a bore, they are quick to respond to any indication of hospitality toward the new ideas. We saw how that was at New Haven, not long ago, when a new impetus was given to philosophical study by the introduction of one of HERBERT SPENCER's works. The students thought the college was getting up to the "pitch of our times."

We cannot, indeed, discover in President BASCOM's paper any evidences that the colleges are taking measures to check the progress of atheism which promise to be successful; nor does he himself display the ability and the temper of mind to cope with it. He writes like a theologian, and has only the old theological arguments to oppose to the new and skeptical ideas now so prevalent. The younger generation are denying President BASCOM's premises, and they are also refusing to accept as rational the methods by which he would sustain them. They would force him to use the new methods, or else they would not listen to him.

But can he use them? His opponents contend that physical experiences have given the lie to theological causes, and that therefore they are not to be taken into account by rational men. They do not worship the GOD of President BASCOM, and they altogether reject the Revelation upon which he must depend for his arguments. In pointing out the danger Mr. BASCOM is perfectly successful. But to show an adequate remedy we need a stronger head and a wiser hand than his.

And What Shall Be Done With Tammany?

Tammany hath yet its uses. Such a permanent corporation, with power to hold real and personal estate, is not wanted as a political organization; but there are other purposes to which it may be put.

Tammany Hall would answer for a variety show, with Mr. JOHN KELLY as manager. Mr. KELLY is said to have been an amateur actor in his earlier days; and he might still personate the characters of the Waddling Alderman, the Barber Alderman, and, perhaps, some others.

But the better and more appropriate use to which to put Tammany Hall would be that of headquarters of a missionary enterprise. Its organization, its nomenaclature, and its signs and emblems are Indian in their character; and nothing could be more in keeping and more useful than to convert it into a starting post of missions to the Indians.

JOHN KELLY himself might make an admirable missionary, and by going among the Indians and remaining with them he could render the highest possible service to the New York Democracy.

Mr. KELLY might be of use to the Government in negotiating treaties with various Indian tribes. If any tribe refused to negotiate, Mr. KELLY would have an opportunity to acquire fame by settling the difficulty in a single hand-to-hand encounter with its Chief—the Chief being armed with a tomahawk and scalping knife, and Mr. KELLY with his shillelah.

When Mr. KELLY is ready to start, we will send a reporter along with him, to keep the public fully informed of his adventures and triumphs.

Since Mr. KELLY is so practised in forming combinations, who knows whether he might not form a lasting partnership with SITTING BULL in the Indian country, and do business, mercantile and political, under the firm name of KELLY & BULL, traders?

On Tuesday morning the sun enters Capricorn, and the astronomical winter begins. These are the shortest days of the year in our hemisphere, and at the North Pole the middle of the long Arctic night is reached while it is midday at the South Pole. The entrance of the sun into the Sign of the Goat was the signal for the ancient Greek and Phœnician sailors to prepare for hurricanes and shipwrecks. ARATUS, in his famous poem on astronomy, thus expresses the sailors' dread of the winter solstice:

> "Be it ne'er thy lot in that month to be tossed
> On the mid ocean; neither by the day
> Far sailest thou, for few the hours of light,
> Nor early on thy perils breaks the dawn,
> For all thy invocations; pitiless
> Siroccos lash the main when Capricorn
> Lodges the sun."

Having reached its furthest southern limit, the sun will, after Tuesday, begin its journey northward. For this reason, Capricorn was anciently called "the goal that turns the sun."

In his message to Congress, HAYES called GRANT "the Commander-in-Chief of our armies during the war for the Union." Article II., section 2, of the Constitution, declares that "the President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States." It must have amused the Congressmen who listened to this document, if any did listen, to find in it so dense an ignorance of the plain words of the Constitution. HAYES was decking GRANT with the title that belonged to ABRAHAM LINCOLN. This can be added to President ZACH. TAYLOR's all the world and the rest of mankind.

Some years ago the country was told that the Mormons were hiving, and that, unless something was done, New Mexico in the course of a few years would be practically annexed to Utah. Now the Governor of Idaho announces that the Mormons are swarming into that Territory, bringing their peculiar institution with them. Why is Parson NEWMAN silent in this crisis?

WHAT IS GOING ON IN EUROPE.

The Porte having been persuaded at last to cede Dulcigno to the Montenegrins, and to issue a circular to its creditors requesting the appointment of a commission to inquire into the resources of the country, with a view to paying its debts, the Greekophiles consider this an auspicious moment to press the claims of Greece to the provinces which, according to the treaty of Berlin, should be returned to that country. Lord Rosebery, as President of the Greek Committee, has lately made a speech in which the views of the majority of intelligent people are clearly set forth. Turkey and Greece stand at the present moment on the brink of a war of which, if once begun, it would be possible to predict the end. It is certain that, should an appeal to arms be made, England, under her present Government, could not stand by and see Greece beaten, and possibly annexed, by Turkey. On the other hand, should Greece be victorious, it is hardly probable that she would be content with the territory promised her by the Berlin treaty, more especially as she would have the moral support of Russia. In such a case England could hardly remain inactive and permit her ancient ally and debtor to be plundered and the security of her Turkish bondholders to be handed over to the Athenian Government. The Greeks are clever enough to see the horns of the dilemma between which England is placed, and they realize that "now or never" applies to their case. They argue that they have waited long enough for the fulfilment of the promises made to them. Their army is ready and the sentiment of Europe is on their side. Why, then, should they not fire away? Curiously enough, the only hitch in their programme is occasioned by the troubles in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone's Ministry seems to be in such a muddle about Irish affairs, and the English populace are getting so exasperated over what they consider a policy of vacillation, that it is quite possible the Liberals may go out of office as suddenly as they entered it a few months ago. When Lord Beaconsfield was in power the Greeks were shrewd enough to keep quiet, and should he return to the Premiership, it would be a sad blow to their hopes; the Conservatives are much more opposed to a dismemberment of Turkey than the Liberals.

The annual cattle show began on the 6th inst. at the Agricultural Hall, London. The distinctive features of cattle show week are as different from those of any other part of the year in London as can well be imagined. In it the farmers throng to the metropolis from all parts of England, and the streets and places of amusement are filled with their burly bodies and merry with their jovial faces and resonant voices. As in the month of May a casual visitor might fairly imagine that the majority of Londoners were clergymen, so, three weeks before Christmas, he might jump to the conclusion that the population was chiefly composed of farmers and stock raisers—or graziers, as they are termed—who might compete, so fat are they, with their cattle for the prizes offered for an excess of adipose tissue. At the recent cattle show held at Birmingham it was remarked that a notable change was coming over the stock farmers' ideas as to the best, or rather the best-paying, cattle to raise. Before American competition in the meat market had forced the farmer to consider which breed of cattle was the least costly to get to market, the dainty, sleek-coated shorthorn was the favorite. Now that it does not pay to feed cattle with the best fodder the land affords, the hardy, omnivorous Scotch cattle are replacing their more expensive brethren. Whatever may be the ultimate pecuniary result of this move, it is certain that most people will consider the absence of the excessively fat meat with which the butchers' shops used to be filled at Christmas a relief. "Too much of a good thing is good for nothing," is a saying that applies with peculiar aptness to fat on Christmas joints. The success of American beef in the English market has been so pronounced that a company has been formed to extend the traffic. The monster ship, the Great Eastern, which has hitherto brought disaster on all connected with her, has been chartered for a period of ten years to carry cattle and meat from Texas or from the River Platte to London. The company thinks it can place prime beef on the English market at the low rate of about six cents a pound. The beasts will be slaughtered on board, and a number of trained butchers from the Chicago stock yards have been engaged for that purpose. Refrigerators are being constructed which will hold about 15,000 carcasses; each one will be suspended between decks, and not packed one on the other as at present. This plan will admit of a more uniform freezing process than is at present possible. The company hopes to break up the Ring that at present rules the British meat market. In spite of the immense foreign supplies of beef, which one would suppose would cause some reduction in the price, prime joints appear to be dearer than ever before.

This is a great season for artists, as the exhibitions of the Society of British Artists, the Society of Painters in Water Colors, and the Dudley Gallery fully attest. The gallery of the Society of British Artists, in Suffolk street, contains over a thousand pictures, none of which are very good, though many are very bad. The more successful as a class are the landscapes. The most remarkable picture in the whole collection bears the curious anatomical name of "The Fibula," and was painted by Arthur Hill. It is an almost nude classic figure, and as a study of anatomy is perfect. The beautiful form is perfectly symmetrical, and the flesh firmly and delicately painted. Great skill is shown in the arrangement of the rather scanty drapery. Gustave Girardot's "Faces in the Fire" is a telling composition. That the artist thinks much of his work is evidenced by the fact that, although the picture is for sale, the copyright is reserved. "An Evicted Tenant, Connemara," and "The Latest News," by W. H. Bartlett, attract much notice. In the former the evicted one is "camping out" beside his late residence, a hut, on a barren seashore. Visions of Boycotting his landlord are surging through his brain. "Lost and Found," by John R. Reid, is a popular sketch, blending landscape and incident. A tired child is sleeping in a field, guarded by a beautifully painted dog. "A Bit of London Pavement," by Ludovici, shows how the most squalid theme can be beautified by the natural joyousness of infant life. Miss Mary Benson has succeeded in "The Old Confessional, Westminster," and if she can, in her future works, improve on this one, her career will be a pleasant and profitable one.

A different class of picture is to be found in the rooms of the Society of Painters in Water Colors, although here, too, the figure paintings are far behind the landscapes. Sir John Gilbert's "Battle of the Standard" is an exception, as are all of Mrs. Allingham's elaborate pieces. Mr. Herbert Marshall's "November Hailcloud Drifts Away" represents a city on a hill in relief against an autumnal sunset. In the foreground runs a river, on which vessels are effectively grouped. Mr. Bradley's "Any Chance of a Job?" represents a laborer out of work inquiring what prospect of employment there may be of a reaper who is engaged in cutting the golden grain. The surrounding green hills and a well-painted sky harmonize well with the yellow grain. Mr. Andrews's "Tomb at Mylassa" is remarkable for its originality. The ancient sepulchre is lighted up by the lurid blaze from a camp fire surrounded by a party of travellers. The chill, blue clouds and the rising moon make a capital contrast with the lurid firelight. The gem of the gallery is, however, Sir John Gilbert's, "The Battle of the Standard." The oxen drawing the cart in which the flag is borne, the ranks of armed men, and the Bishop encouraging the warriors and the wild peasantry, make up a remarkably handsome picture. Mrs. Allingham's twelve little gems hidden among, but not eclipsed by, their larger neighbors, must not be passed unnoticed, since, next to Sir John's picture, they are the most deserving of close inspection.

The Dudley Gallery is composed of cabinet pictures in oil, which as sketches are not to be considered in comparison with pictures of more elaborate character. There is, nevertheless, a great amount of talent exhibited here. Among the most noteworthy are M. Fantin's "Panier de Fleurs d'Automne" and an intricate study of nasturtiums by the same master.

The Berlin correspondent of the London *Daily News* reports that the police authorities have paid a strange posthumous tribute to the poet Heinrich Heine. A portion of his works, it is said, have been confiscated and ordered to be destroyed. The reason given for this singular proceeding is the fact that certain passages in the condemned portion of the dead poet's works contain unflattering remarks in regard to the reigning house of Hohenzollern. This petty attack on Heine's remains would be in keeping with the spirit now manifested in Germany against all who belong to the Jewish race. Heine did not belong to any clearly defined faith, but he was of Jewish descent; his nearest relatives, the great Hamburg bankers of the same name, are Jews to this day. No one would be more amused at this unexpected outburst of petty official spite than the dead poet himself. Heine's prophetic mind foresaw the union of Germany and the reëstablishment of the empire. Many passages in his works refer to this event as certain to happen in the nearest future. But he would have thought that the creation of national character and imperial statesmanship would have felt itself strong enough not to fear the light satire of a poet long laid in his grave; and the Berlin police authorities might have done the present head of the house of Hohenzollern the honor to assume that he could endure the poet's wit without dismay or anger. Of course this raid can only be a temporary measure of a ridiculous local official, for it would be impossible to carry it out. It is now about twenty years since a complete edition of Heine's works was published, and there is scarcely a cultured household in Germany where a copy of the works of the greatest poet and satirist Germany has produced cannot be found.

On the 29th of November, 1780, the most liberal, intelligent, and humane monarch who ever ruled Austria took into his own hands, absolutely, the reins of imperial government. It was upon that date that Joseph the Second succeeded to the sole administration of an authority which he had already shared for fifteen years with the Empress Marie Thérèse. Vienna celebrated this centenary with a popular festival. Joseph the Good, "the friend of mankind," was conspicuously the sovereign of the people. His universal benevolence, the liberality of his creed, his enlightened devotion to the arts and sciences, made of him a grand figure among the monarchs of his time. He emancipated the peasants, introduced freedom of worship and the liberty of the press, and reformed the administration of justice, finance, and education. His especial zeal was directed against the religious orders, whose magnificent establishments he sequestrated and converted to public use as hospitals and asylums. He loved to roam about his capital as Haroun Al Raschid used to wander through Bagdad, but he had no headsman at his heels. Once, in Moravia, he took a plough from a peasant's hand and finished the serf's work, merely to know by experience the labor it entailed. He was a breakwater for the people, against which the encroachments of the aristocracy and of the priesthood dashed in vain. He ruled thus wisely for ten years and died amid the lamentations of his subjects. The Viennese celebration of his accession to the throne began with a meeting of the Town Council. Their hall was profusely decorated with silken favors and garlands. A large bust of the Emperor stood between crowns of laurel. The civic dignitaries went in state to the chapel of the Capuchin Friars, where a commemorative service was held. One of the most effective features of the imposing ceremony was the singing of the *Beati Mortui* by the Vienna Männer-Gesang-Verein. At night there was a grand full dress performance at the Stadt Theatre, at the close of which the patriotic hymn, "Gott Erhalte Unsern Kaiser," was sung by an immense chorus. The students held their own celebration the night before in the great Hall of Music, where libations of beer and clouds of incense from pipes and cigars honored the memory of the good Kaiser. It must be a gratifying fact for the present Emperor to hear the whole press apostrophize him as the only successor of Joseph the Second who has inherited his virtues and his wisdom.

The ancient Hospice of Saint Gothard is to be closed. The establishment dates back to the fourteenth century. The tunnel of the Mount St. Gothard will make the hospice useless. It was razed to the ground by an avalanche toward the end of the last century, but was rebuilt shortly afterward on a larger scale. In 1799 it was ravaged by Massena during his attack on Souvorow. The building fell almost into ruins, but was once more restored by the authorities, and has ever since remained open to poor travellers. These are generally laborers from upper Italy, who come in troops. Over one hundred of them were recently received in a single night. Large numbers of wandering Germans are also accommodated, but Swiss and French applicants for shelter are few. Of late years the refuge received annually an average of 20,000 travellers, for each of whom is provided a warm meal and a night's lodging. The expenses are borne in part by the Governments of the Canton of Ticino and of Italy, and by annual subscriptions which are taken up throughout the Swiss cantons.

There has been but one conspicuous dramatic novelty in Paris for the past two or three weeks. M. François Coppée, the well-known poet, has composed a fantastic ballet called "La Korrigane," for which M. Charles M. Widor has contributed the music. It was produced at the Grand Opera in the most sumptuous manner, and achieved an immediate success. A new ballet is an event in Paris, and the first night of "La Korrigane" was attended by everybody in society, including the ex-Queen of Spain with a brilliant suite. She expressed cordial delight at the triumph of Mlle. Mauri, the *première danseuse* of the ballet, who is a Spaniard, and who, making, with obvious nervousness, her first appearance, took the house by storm, and ascended at once, *en pirouette*, to an upper niche in the temple of Terpsichore.

London society is half puzzled, half amused by the extraordinary reports of Mme. Blavatsky's performances among the English civil servants in India. It seems that the Anglo-Indian officials have shown an unusual cordiality in their welcome of the Russian mystic and Col. Olcott, who continues to be her escort—though why such a wonderfully able person should need an escort is not quite clear. Her miracles, at all events, seem past finding out. At picnics teacups disappear from lunch baskets and vanish into tree tops, only to be found afterward in somebody's solar helmet; long-lost brooches turn up unexpectedly in cabbage beds; weird missives of cigarette paper, on which are traced mysterious characters, come from Thibet to people who hardly knew of the existence of such a country; in fact, the most amazing phenomena occur under the most commonplace circumstances. The interest taken in all this by London society seems to promise a world of lionization for Mme. Blavatsky whenever she pays a visit to the British metropolis.

N. L. T.

SUNBEAMS.

—For the great cathedral at Melbourne an anonymous gift of $50,000 has just been made.

—The movement to raise $18,000 for a house of worship in Paris for Pere Hyacinthe Loyson drags slowly along.

—Prof. Buttz has been made President of Drew Theological Seminary, to take the place of Bishop Hurst. Dr. Buttz is a comparatively young man, but has been connected with the seminary for a number of years, and has made his mark as one of the most practical educators in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

—The Theological Seminary of the United Brethren, at Dayton, Ohio, has thirty-two students, but only thirty-one of them are "Brethren." The other is a lady, who proposes to enter the ministry of the United Brethren Church. Four professors devote their whole time and effort to teaching these thirty-two students.

—It is now said that, owing to Mr. McCormick's recent large donations to the Chicago Theological Seminary, Prof. Patton will stay there instead of accepting the invitation to Princeton. The McCormick contribution to this Chicago school of the prophets now amounts to about $200,000. Mr. Pardee's gifts to Lafayette College sum up half a million.

—The Presbyterian church of Pleasantville, N. Y., has a new pastor, the Rev. Mr. Weicher, and also a new building. When Mr. Weicher was ready to be installed, a few days ago, the building was not ready for use. So the installation services were held in the Episcopal church, which, by a generous act of courtesy, was loaned to the Presbyterians for the day.

—The Westminster Presbyterian Church of this city has had new vitality infused into by the accession to its pastorate of the Rev. Edward M. Deems, who came a few months ago from the busy experience of pastoral work in a live church in Colorado. The church is now a very cheerful place, with a wealth of sunshine by day and a flood of artificial illumination by night. At the last communion sixteen new converts were received.

—The civil and ecclesiastical authorities recently joined hands at Colchester, England, in a very curious way. The pastor of the Congregational church was sick, and could not be present at the communion service. Thereupon three laymen took charge of the communion, one of whom was the Mayor. By virtue of his eminent position in society, the Mayor was invited to preside. This shocked some people, who objected to an unordained person administering the Lord's Supper. But the Mayor went on just as if he had been a parson.

—The "Faith-cure" people at Springfield, Mass., do not rely on prayer alone for the healing of diseases, but anoint their patients with oil. They do this by dipping the first finger of the right hand in oil and then putting it on the sufferer's forehead. It is believed that they have a preference for pure olive oil, when it is to be had, but there is so much of this article that is adulterated with oil made from swine's fat that there is trouble in getting the genuine article. As the Bible says nothing about the particular description of oil to be used, there is no certainty as to the operation of this aid to prayer and faith.

—Some Episcopal ladies and gentlemen in St. Louis hired one of the better sort of theatres for a week for the benefit of a local charity. The manager ran the establishment very much as usual, while the church people encouraged their friends to attend for the sake of helping the charity which was to be refreshed. This turned out in the end very much more profitable and less troublesome than the church fair usually is at the end of the week. The profits were footed up and the sum turned over to the charity in whose aid the enterprise had been carried on. The ladies and gentlemen who were responsible for it say that they believe it quite as free from objection as any church fair could possibly be.

—Miss Sarah Smiley, the eminent lady evangelist, has joined the Episcopal Church in West Chester, Pa. Miss Smiley was a Quaker. She was immersed several years ago by Brother Pentecost in his baptistery at the Hanson Place Church in Brooklyn. She did not by this act join the Baptist Church, and Brother Pentecost was severely criticised by some of the most particular of his denomination for administering the ordinance to one who did not own herself a Baptist. Miss Smiley has been among several of the leading denominations in carrying on her labors, principally the Methodists and the Presbyterians. Among the clergymen and Bible students who pass the summer at Saratoga she has been a great favorite. She still retains the simplicity of her original training.

—A good deal of stir has been made over the present condition of ex-Shepherd Cowley. His term of imprisonment is almost out; but there is a fine of $250 to be paid. If this fine is not paid, he stands committed for 250 days more, which will carry him well into the summer holidays. An effort is on foot to secure his pardon, which, if successful, will dispense with the necessity of the payment of the fine. It is said by some of his friends who sign the petition for release that Cowley has no money, and that if the fine is paid it will have to be paid out of their pockets, which will not further the ends of justice. To this it is replied that if they are his friends they should cheerfully subscribe the money and pay up, instead of asking public justice to forego that much. There are over fifty friends, mostly Episcopalians, who sign the petition. If Cowley is deserving of the indulgence they ask for him they can easily obtain it by subscribing five dollars apiece. Little Louis Victor is now fat and hearty, having recovered from the woful plight in which he was found when in the "Fold."

—To-day the Sunday schools will have their "review day," devoting the study hour to the consideration of the lessons studied during the closing quarter of the year. There have been eleven lessons, embracing the history of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and covering a period of somewhat less than a century. The first lesson is in the twenty-sixth chapter of Genesis, and the last in the fiftieth, which concludes the book. The series opens with a view of the prosperity of Isaac, who was, like his father Abraham, very rich in cattle and herds. He lived a quiet life, disturbed only by the dissension between Jacob and Esau, and died at an advanced age. The quarrel between Isaac's two sons, which grew out of the sharp trick played by Jacob, made a total change in Jacob's life, taking him to Mesopotamia, where he married two wives, and whence he afterward returned to the land of Canaan a wealthy man. Jacob was always in some trouble or other. After settling in Canaan and enjoying a fair amount of prosperity in the pastoral life he led, the difficulty about Joseph nearly broke the old man's heart. He had petted Joseph until he had almost spoiled him. The jealousy of the other sons of Jacob was thus aroused against Joseph, and the poor lad was sold as a slave to the Midianite traders, who took him to Egypt. Joseph's elevation from the position of a slave in prison to that of ruler of Egypt is known to every Sunday school child. The large space which is given in the Scripture record to the story of Joseph shows that the lessons it contains are of the highest importance. The events it records are of great interest in their bearing on the experience of the Israelitish nation. That which was at first intended to be a mere visit became a permanent residence, and afterward a bondage. Jacob and Joseph both died in Egypt. The stay of the Israelites in Egypt continued, under the most vexatious circumstances, until Moses led them out in 1491 B. C., about two centuries and a half after Joseph went there.

"A Silver Lining," by Mary Anderson, in Christmas number of *New York Evening Express* on Wednesday next—Ads.